SUMMER

SUMMER漫画团队是中国原创漫画的旗帜团队。由资深漫画家姚非拉创办，拥有北京非拉艺术工作室有限公司、杭州夏天岛影视动漫制作有限公司等两家下属公司。旗下拥有猪乐桃、于彦舒、夏达等一线人气漫画家，作品代表了中国最高水准。历年来几乎囊括了国内重要的漫画奖项，多次得到国家领导人李长春、陈至立的亲切接见。李长春、刘淇、王岐山以及全国人大、政协、港澳台办的各级领导多次到团队视察调研，就动漫产业政策进行咨询。团队还多次代表中国漫画界出访海外，作品广泛授权海外，并曾成功授权央视改编系列电视动画片。

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游园惊梦

【编绘】夏达

湖南少年儿童出版社

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夏达绘

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夏达

从高中开始创作漫画。最早于《北京卡通》杂志发表短篇作品《成长》，毕业后赴京从事专业的漫画创作工作，曾于《北京卡通》、《电漫》、《故事》、《漫友》等杂志发表过多部漫画作品。在《北京卡通》杂志连载的长篇漫画《米狩兰的晨星》广受好评。

主要作品

《成长》、《冬日的童话》、《夏天的味道》、《雪落无声》、《寂寞的地图》、《米狩兰的晨星》、《同类》、《夏天》、《游园惊梦》、《安多莉娅》、《初夏》、《予不语》等。

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE 01

PEONY PAVILION 03

THE MALE PHOENIX SEEKS HIS MATE 13

REED 23

AH JING 33

SOLITARY RABBIT 42

POSTSCRIPT 68

ARTBOOK & RANDOM TALK 71

AFTERWARD 83

POETRY BACKGROUND 85

I hadn't read poetry for a long time, until I flipped through Xia Da's art.

I liked reading *Poems of Jiaxuan* in high school. I knew that the phrase "Watching swallows, bidding farewell to love" was an allusion when I read it, and went to find the original *Poems of Mao* to compare it with. I can still recite from memory the *Songs of the Spring and Autumn Period · Songs of the Country · Swallow:*

> *Flying swallows, with uneven wings. Sending sister to be married, to a faraway place. Watching her disappearing figure, with pouring tears.*
>
> *Flying swallows, up and down. Sending sister to be married, seeing her off again and again. Watching her disappearing figure, standing straight with tears.*
>
> *Flying swallows, with uneven calls. Sending sister to be married, to the far north. Watching her disappearing figure, my heart aches with pain.*
>
> *Let her be lonely, her heart is honest and kind. Gentle and virtuous, generous and cautious. Missing her ancestors, she will use their wisdom to encourage herself.*

I possessed no knowledge of the story of Wei Jiang and Dai Wei when I first read the poem; only surprise and admiration for the words *Flying Swallows.* Suddenly, I had visions of the aging heaven and earth, someone bidding farewell while standing high, a pair of swallows in the azure sky. Ancient writing has this mystical feeling about it. Sometimes, when one's heart is moved by the words, one can rid oneself of mortality for a short period of time, quietly thinking about things in the autumn twilight. When I was young, teachers always said that a good book can inspire so many ideas and upon reading and closing the book, one would sink into a contemplative state. That is probably the feeling one may get after reading good ancient texts. However, that kind of focused and contemplative reading has become a luxury that most people don't have time for these days.

After reading through Xia Da's *The Peony Pavilion,* I once again had the sumptuous opportunity in this not-too-cold winter to close my book, drink a cup of warm tea, and reflect: I recalled a poem in *Flying Swallows.*

Xia Da and I are not well acquainted. We worked together on the design of *Magazine of Nine Provinces,* but we have never met. I only hear that she is a beautiful girl who loves to draw.

Xia Da is a girl who draws quite casually. She once drew a cover for our magazine; it was extremely beautiful, with a girl lying in a summer's blossoming lotus of a shallow pond. However, the art director, after a long thought, said that it was too soft and not suitable for the magazine's purposes. Xia Da wasn't angry, and didn't say anything about it. She said that she like drawing it, and that it was all right whether or not it is used.

This time, I once again see the girl lying in a lotus flower of a shallow pool. However, divided into another picture are cherry blossoms, tranquil butterflies, the moon, and a young man lying in deep sleep under the summer shade.

Everyone says that these five short stories are mystical and strange. However, they are not that mystical, nor are they strange. In fact, it's to the point that I cannot decide whether or not these can even be called "stories". They are too simple, with wishful longing, dazed pauses, and ending in sudden embraces. If they were movies, it might only take twenty seconds to finish one story, but I think Xia Da needs to draw for a long time. If I asked her why she's drawing these, she'll probably answer as usual: because she wants to draw.

I don't know if Xia Da's stories are what the market and readers enjoy, but her determination has made them beautiful. As least some people, like me, slowly drank a cup of tea after reading and thought of a girl from ancient times saying farewell under a pair of swallows flying in the sky. At that moment, I was very tranquil. The world was very tranquil.

I went back to two thousand years ago, rafting on a river, playing the flute and forgetting the past, and seeing a white salmon jump out of the water. At that moment, the cherry blossoms withered, lying broken in the dust.

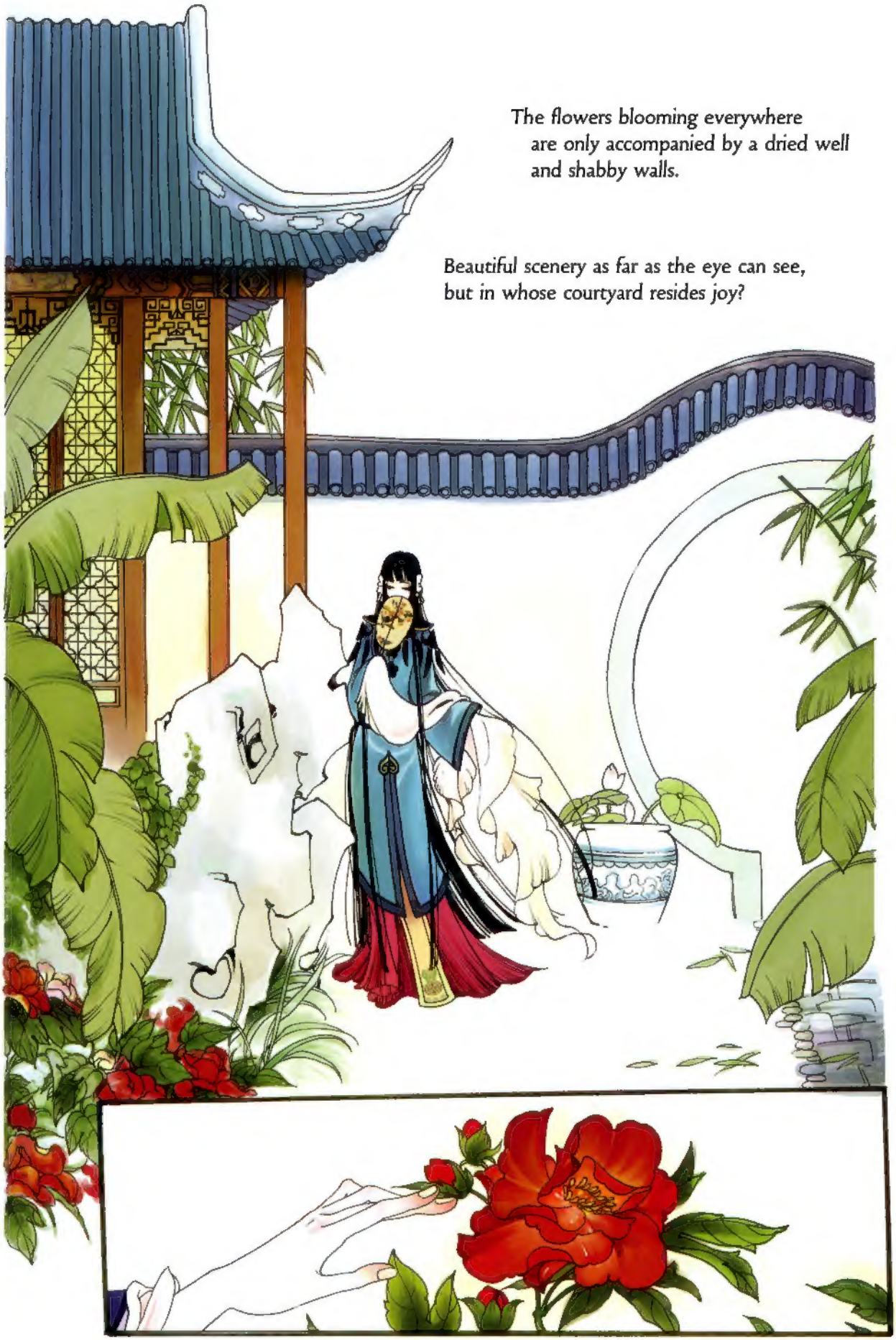
—Jiangnan

梦回莺啭。乱煞年光遍。人立小庭深院。
炷尽沉烟。抛残绣线。终今垂泪对东风?
惊游梦园

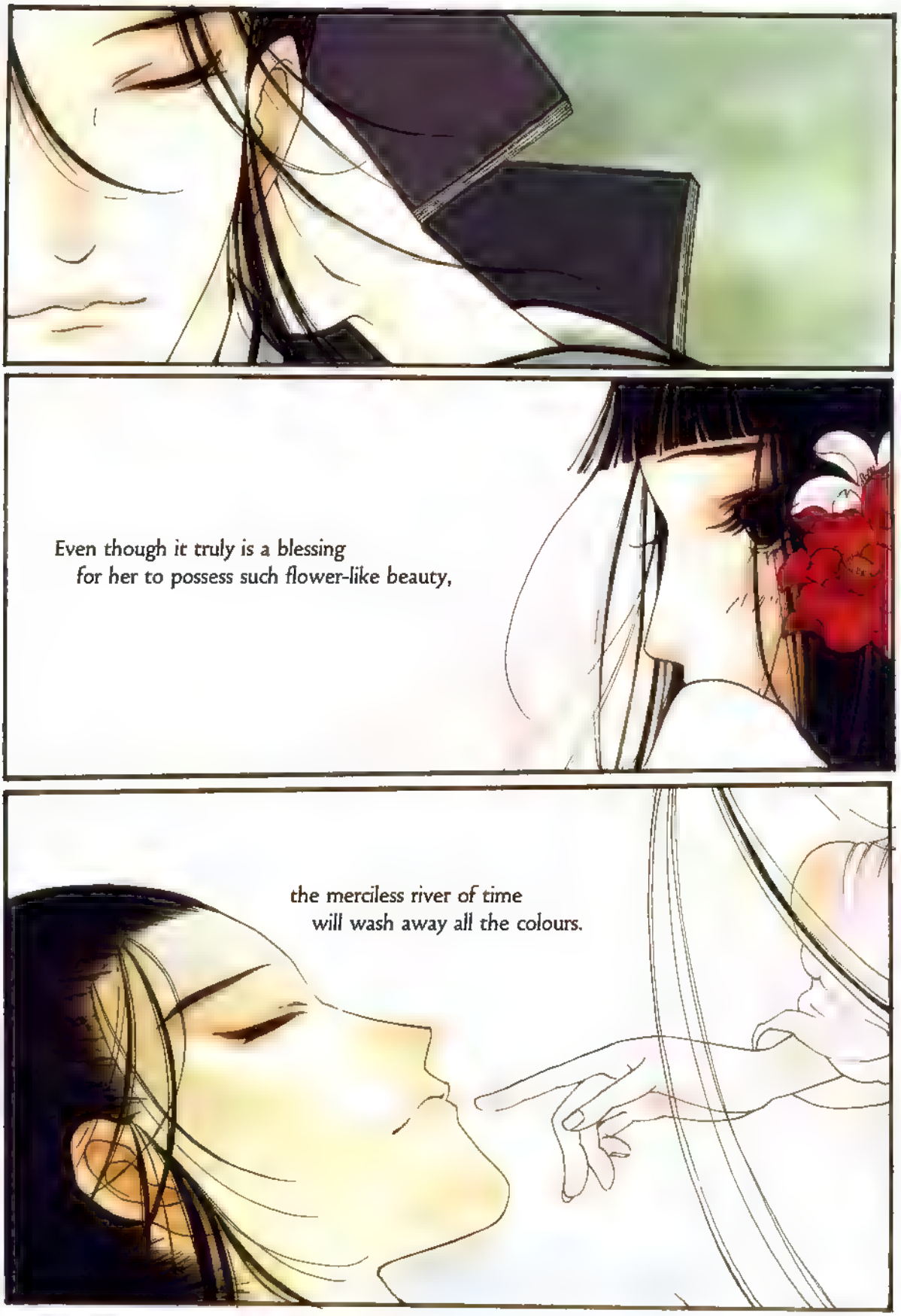
The spring light
of the empty courtyard
reflects off of
a spider's web,
the thin light blowing
in the wind.

She steals a moment
to fix her hair.
Unexpectedly, the flowered mirror
sees part of her face,
making the shy lady fumble
with her hair.
But to whom can the demure lady
show her beauty when she is caged
in her courtyard?

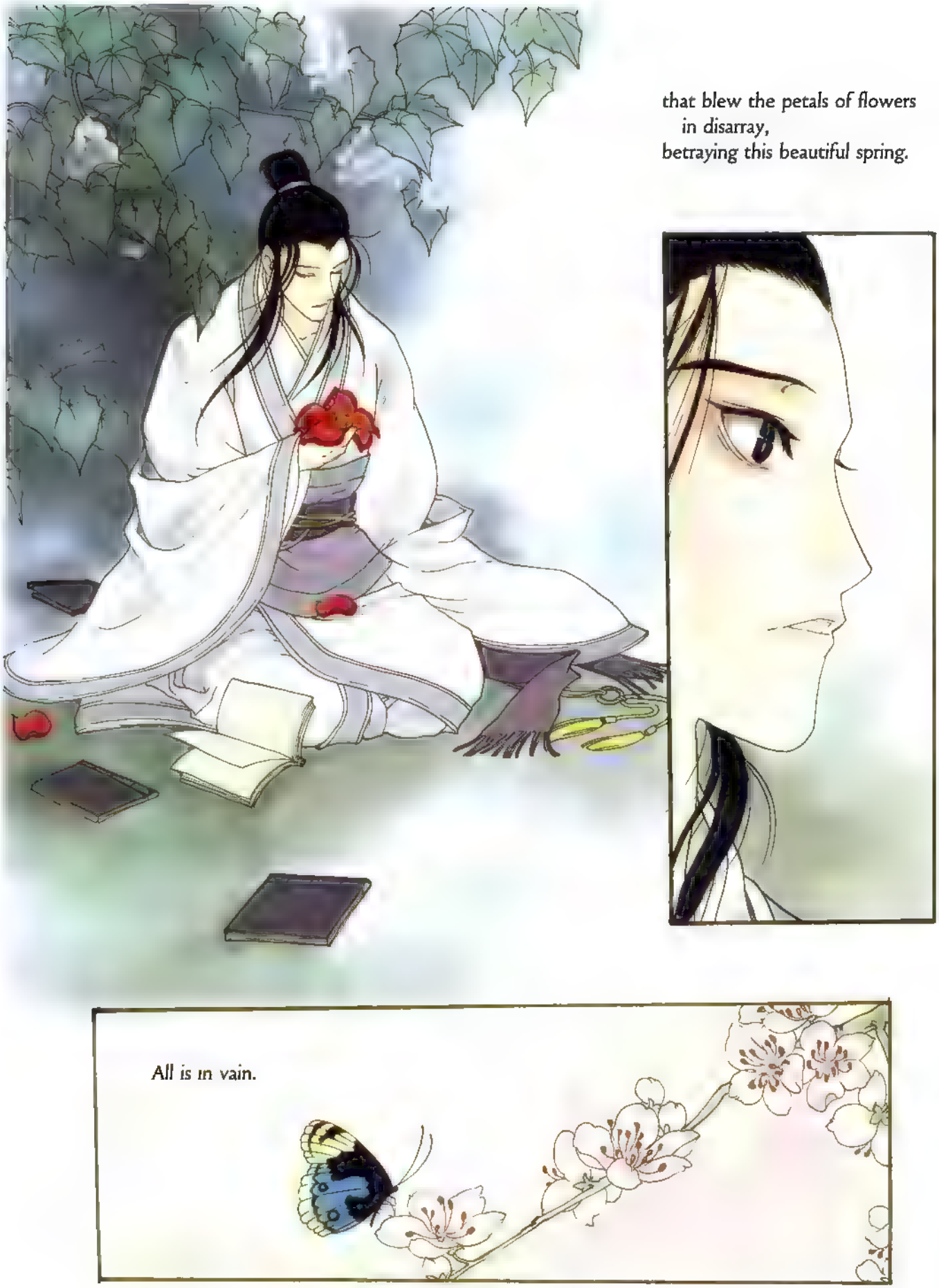
How can one know about spring
without venturing
to the garden outside?


The flowers blooming everywhere
are only accompanied by a dried well
and shabby walls.
Beautiful scenery as far as the eye can see,
but in whose courtyard resides joy?

Like the spring, no one is here to admire the beauty.


Even though it truly is a blessing
for her to possess such flower-like beauty,
the merciless river of time
will wash away all the colours.

May this instant be preserved for eternity
while the plants and flowers
lie in slumber
fearing the
bitter wind,


that blew the petals of flowers
in disarray,
betraying this beautiful spring.
All is in vain.

"Spring scenery" is a very appropriate phrase, as if the year's splendour is concentrated in the three or four months. Fruits, vines, grasses, and flowers all sing vigorously one after another, never pausing.

The text of the opera is breathtaking: "The flowers blooming everywhere are only accompanied by a dried well and shabby walls. Beautiful scenery as far as the eye can see, but in whose courtyard resides joy? ..." Considering this type of torturous wandering, desperately clinging to the injured passion, it's no wonder that Ms. Dai Yu exclaimed that "there's good literary works even in operas."

If one is not used to the long pauses in operas, it is also good to read the text, as it is difficult in our modern lives to duplicate that natural, sophisticated writing. I did not intend to interpret the classic, "Wandering in the Garden for a Song, Dreaming for a Hundred Years," with art, only intending to borrow a corner of spring light and a piece of the dream world...

This has nothing to do with Du Li-niang. Most of it is probably from the amorphous concept of whether it is the sleeping Zhou Zhuang who is dreaming of the butterfly, or the butterfly who is dreaming of Zhou Zhuang.

"Long or short, a dream remains a dream. But from the years that have been coming and going, which year is a true year?"

A courtyard full of the gentle spring light is a perfect setting for a butterfly that accidently entered the human world. It's a pity that the young man under the flowers' shade was not able to catch the view in time. "Even though it is truly a blessing for her to possess such flower-like beauty, the merciless water of time will wash away all the colours." The little thoughts of a butterfly are shorter than a sigh; encounters and partings are easier than the wind carrying a fallen petal.

While I was in a daze one sunny afternoon, this thought, along with a butterfly, fluttered past.

At that time, the wind blew past the yellow pages of "The Peony Pavilion" that I found on Grandpa's bookshelf.

Unexpected meetings and incidental encounters are this simple.

Peony Pavilion

游园惊梦

Pure Scans

Translator:

Raw Scanner:

TL Checker:

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Shinnen

風來國

There exists a beauty

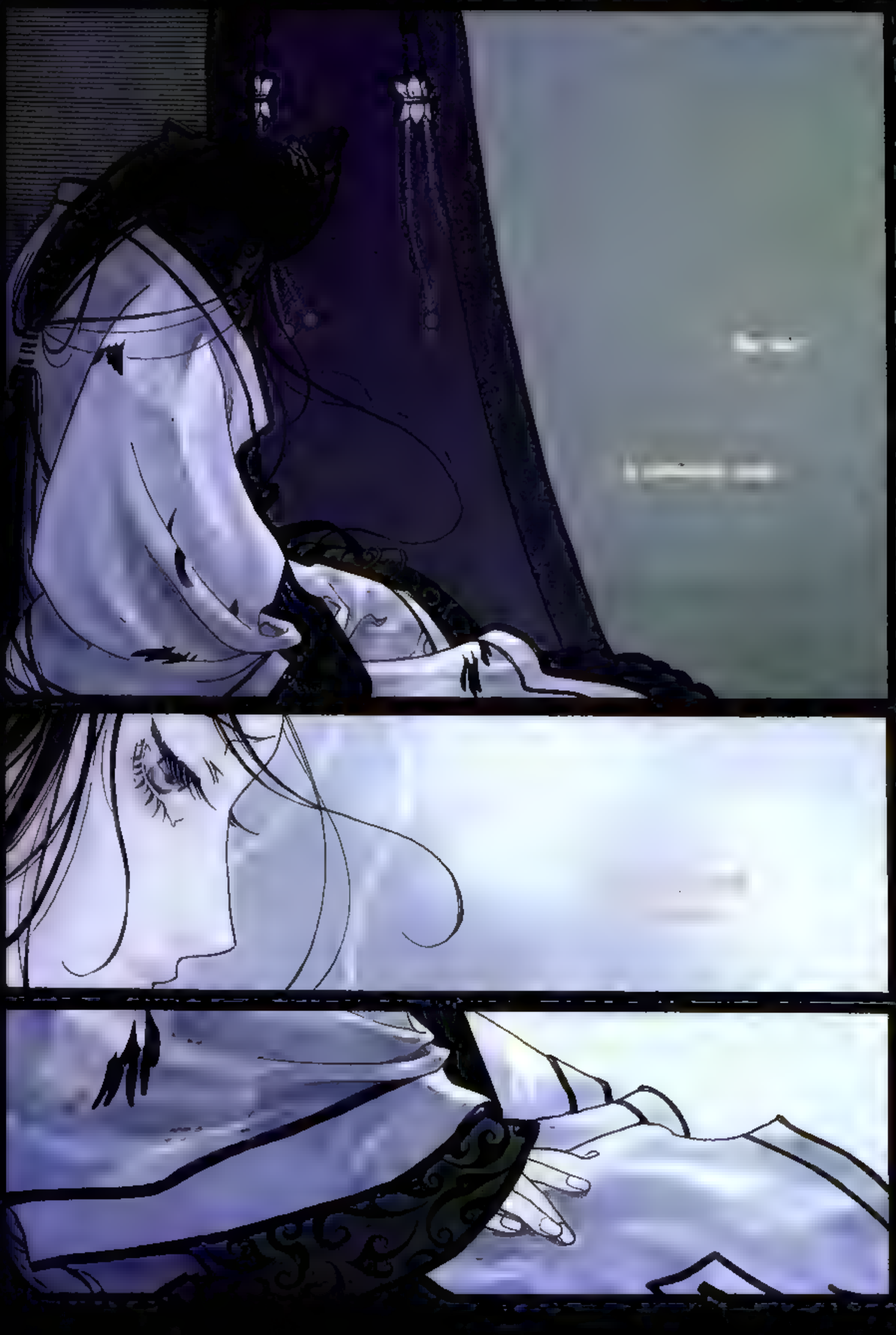
I've been unable to forget
since our first meeting.

Just one day
without her in my sight

is enough to drive me mad
with unbearable longing

like a male phoenix
flying far and wide

seeking his mate
across the four seas.



I pour out my heart.

Just when can we meet again,

so my wavering feelings can be soothed?

I long for our virtues
to coincide

so we may live
hand in hand forever.

The thought that I may be
unable to fly with you
makes me fall into
a death-like despair.

In the cold of winter, north of the mirrored lake, a female crane fell victim to a hunter's snare. The male crane's anguished cries seemed endless as he circled above her for many days, eventually dying from the pain in his heart.

People of the time were surprised, and exclaimed, "Life, death, meetings, partings; one shares and indulges in every moment with others. Should one be regretful? No, thankful!"

Legend says the cranes cried
relentlessly until they bled,
their beaks dyed red.

I remember the saying, "The young do not read *Water Margin*, the old do not read *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, men do not read *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and women do not read *Romance of the West Chamber*." Regardless of whether or not this saying is correct, I read all types of books when I was little, without exceptions. When I read *Romance of the West Chamber* as a child, I didn't really understand half the story. My only thought was that it was boring and dragged on and that it was not as fun and exciting as *Journey to the West*. When I was just about to put it down and rummage through the bookshelf for some romantic legends, I found the poem *The Male Phoenix Seeks His Mate*.

Unlike the previous enchanting scenery, this is the clear moon that rises quietly above the sea; it has a bleak classic elegance that even a child can vaguely sense.

There exists a beauty I've been unable to forget
since the first day we met.

Just one day without her in my sights
drives me mad with unbearable longing

like a male phoenix flying far and wide
seeking his mate across the four seas.

But she is nowhere near.

Replacing music with words, I pour out my heart.

When can I see her again,
and have my restlessness be soothed?

I long for my words to gain our favour,
so we may live hand in hand forever.

The thought that I may be unable to fly with you
makes me fall into a deathly despair.

When I got older, I heard about the story of Zhuo Wenjun and Sima Xiangru that was the origin of *The Male Phoenix Seeks His Mate*. However, when I read it, it turned out to be completely diferent. It was also very elegant and full of literary grace, but I always felt that there were traces of the imprudence of adolescence...

The intelligent youth Zhuo Wenjun was the favourite daughter of a wealthy family. With fine poetry and talents in chess and music, the beautiful young lady must have been very pure, noble, and proud. Yet she was moved by the song *The Male Phoenix Seeks His Mate*, and fell in love with the young man of white clothes that was playing the guqin from the other side of the screen. Isn't it rare for a lady of that era to say, "I'm willing to accompany this man, travelling thousands of miles, never leaving his side", especially a lady of her esteem? Furthermore, she opened a wine shop with him and tended the store herself.

Part A.

This male phoenix has returned to his old home,

from roaming the four seas searching for his mate.

Time was not yet ripe,
there was no way to meet her;

then what a surprise:
this evening I come up to this hall,

and there's a dazzling maiden
in the women's quarters.

The room near but she far: this poisons my guts.

How can we entwine our necks
like mandarin ducks?

How can we flutter about, and together soar?

Part B.

Lady phoenix, lady phoenix: come with me and nest,

be supported, breed with me, forever be my wife,

exchange love in the usual way,
our hearts harmonious:

if you follow me at midnight who will know?

Our wings together will rise,
fluttering as high we fly.

If your are unmoved by my feelings,
I will be miserable.

When I was little, I always thought that Sima Xiangru definitely loved Zhuo Wenjun very very much. Why wouldn't he love her? He definitely saw her as a treasure that must be carefully kept in the depths of his heart. I couldn't believe it as I read further into the story, to the part when Sima Xiangru began his job as a palace official and began having thoughts of divorcing his wife and taking concubines. In a fairytale, the prince and princess "live happily ever after", and that's the end. Why would there be anything after? What's after was the mournful response that Zhuo Wenjun wrote after receiving Sima Xiangru's heartless divorce letter:

"After the one parting, there were yearnings between the two places. You said it was for three or four months, but who knew that it would become five or six years? I'm in no mood to play the seven-stringed guqin, I can't write any eight-lined poems, and the nine-chained toy snaps in the middle. From a pavilion ten miles away, I stare wistfully afar. A hundred grievances, a thousand longings, ten thousand obligations mingled with reluctance to blame my husband. Ten thousand sentences and one thousand words are not enough. A hundred bored moments, leaning against the railing ten times. On the ninth, when families gather; I hiked alone, and saw a lone goose. During the eight month's festival, the moon was full; our family was not. In the middle of the seventh month, I burnt incense and lit candles, praying to the heavens for an answer. During the heat of the sixth month, everyone waved their fans, yet my cold heart chilled me. The flowers of the fifth month were red like fire, yet are dampened by waves of cold rain. When the loquats become yellow in the fourth month, I stood restlessly before the mirror. The cherry blossoms of the third month drifted along the water. The strings snapped from the kites of the second month. Oh! Husband, my husband! When we next reincarnate, how I wish I could be the man, and you the woman, for one more life together.

Later on, it was told that Sima Xiangru was embarrassed by his actions and had a change of heart. Even though it's considered to be a classic romance story, I feel a cold spot in my heart.

In reality, romance actually has a past tense and present tense...

A friend asked me why I didn't use Sima Xiangru's *The Male Phoenix Seeks His Mate*. Can I say that I don't like this classic tale even though it isn't completely true?

I still like the poem I first read, *The Male Phoenix Seeks His Mate* better. Eternal and classic. A quiet, and soft...despair.

Peony Pavilion

游园惊梦

Pure Scans

Translator:

Raw Scanner:

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Shinnen

Page 10 PARAGRAPH 1

It s sa d that the young shou d not read *Water Marg n* (水滸傳/Shu Hu Zhuan) because t may provoke imprudence in youth w th ts deta led battles, the old should not read *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* 三國演義/San Guo Yan Y) because it may nc te calculat ng evil with ts many p ans and strategies, ma es should not read *Dream of the Red Chamber* 紅樓夢/Hong L ou Meng) e se they be nfluenced by the womanly habits, and that females shou d not read *Romance of the West Chamber* 西廂記/X X ang J e se they be ured by the immoral act of eloping that is present in the story

Page 11 PARAGRAPH 2

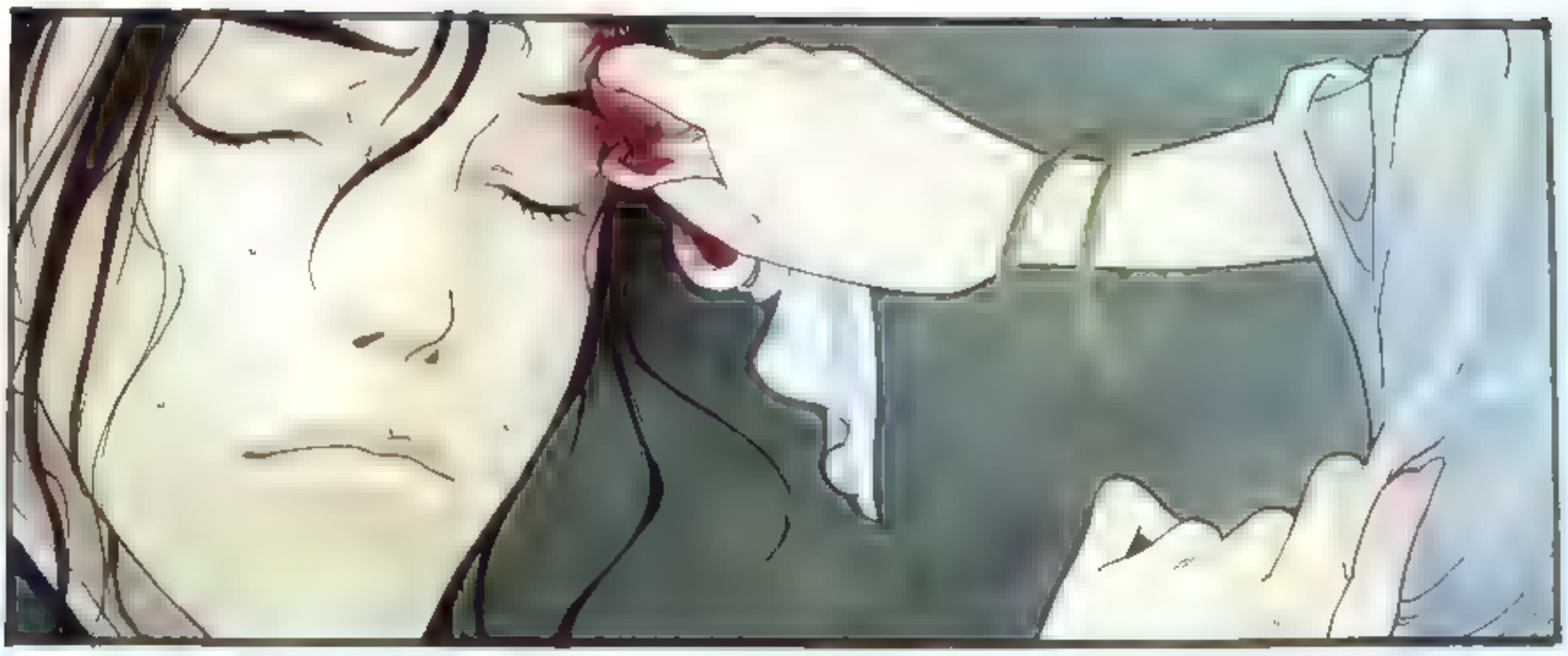
White clothes Wh te c othes represented commoners, since dye was expensive to them.

Guqin. A p ucked seven str ng Chinese instrument considered a refined nstrument to be played by gentlemen

Page 12 PARAGRAPH 1

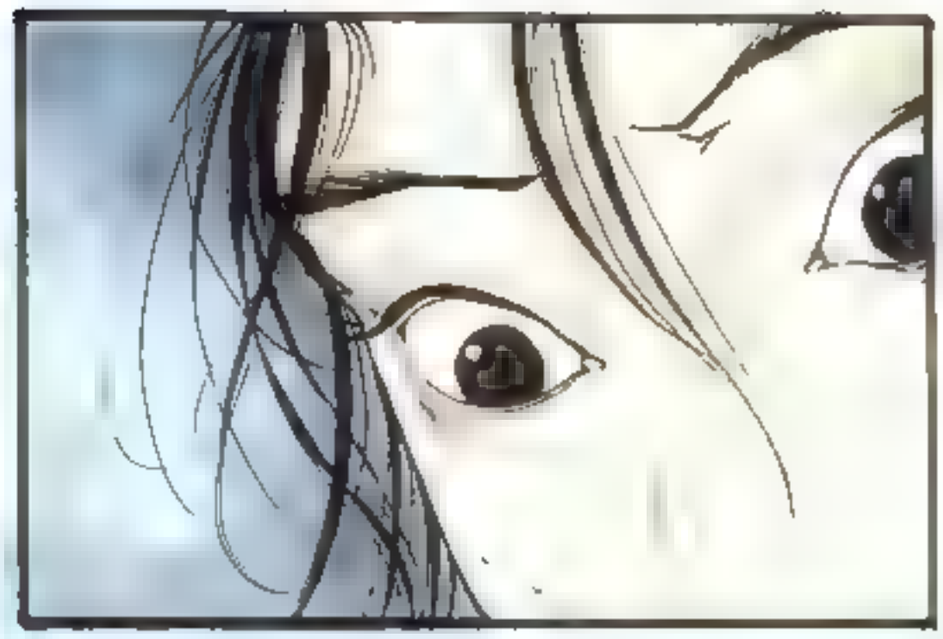
Sima Xiangru's "heartless divorce letter" to Zhou Wenjun. The etter cons sted of thirteen characters, "一二三四五六七八九十百千万" mean ng "one two three four five six seven e ght n ne ten hundred thousand" They are all the numbers characters in Chinese except for "亿" mean ng "m ll on" 亿 is a so homophon c to "忆" memor es and "意" meaning The eft out 亿 conveys the message that Sima Xiangru no onger has feel ngs for Zhuo Wenjun and that the r love s meaning ess Zhou Wenjun's rep y l terally returned each of these numbers to him

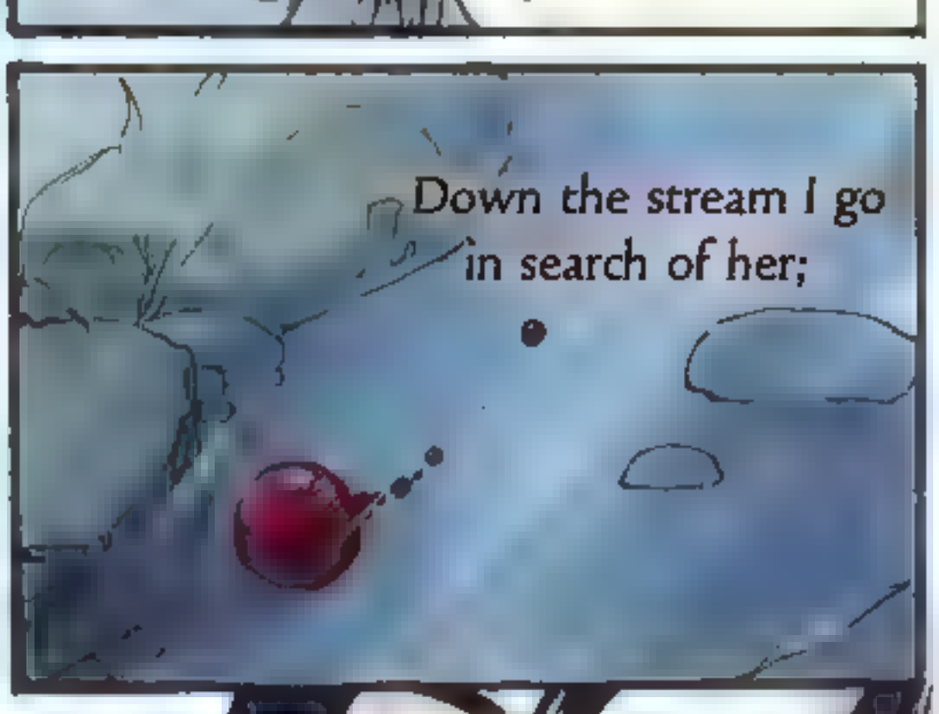
The ripe reeds grow thickly,
the crystal dew still frost.



My beloved stands
on one side of the water.

Up the stream I go in search of her;
the path long
and arduous.





amidst the water, I find her.

The lush reeds grow densely,
the crystal dew still wet.
My beloved stands on the edge of the water.
Up the stream I go in search of her;
the path is steep and impeding.
Down the stream I go in search of her;
upon the bank, I find her.
Major General.
Come in.

This servant has already inquired deeply into this matter, but all the fishermen of this area say they haven't seen the lady.

However, Mr. Li said that he caught a rare white salmon and insisted it be a gift to the General for nourishment.

The kitchen made it into congee. Please eat it while it's still warm, General.

Send back some money on my behalf. Also... send in an artist.

Yes, sir.

Up the stream I go
in search of her;

the path is meandering
and arduous.

Down the stream I go
in search of her;

upon the water's edge,
I find her.

Whenever I illustrate a story, my first readers are always my close friends. It's probably because birds of a feather flock together, everyone's likes and dislikes are pretty similar—except for *Reed*.

Some would love it very much, thinking it a display of fate. Others would hate it, deeming it a purposeful burden on the heart.

Actually, what I thought of then was very simple. If I let them know the real cause of this matter is a spicy fish head... I think I would get beaten up.

The words of this story originate from *The Book of Songs - Odes of Qin*.

When one speaks of Qin, the first impression is usually "rough", right?

The atmosphere in the northwest is very aggressive. Soldiers almost seem cruel—nothing near "graceful". So, when I found out that *Reed* is from *The Book of Songs - Odes of Qin*, it surprised me to the extent that I repetitively checked to make sure that I wasn't mistaken.

It's hard to imagine that such a soft and gentle song would be one of the top ten from *The Book of Songs*. It sounds like a song from the waters of the south, not a song from the sands of the northwest... But if that were true, then it would be very different... One is the soft and fragrant warmth in the hands of a white-faced scholar, one is the melancholy hidden in the deepest corner of a rough warrior's heart.

I suddenly realized—*Reed* is actually very beautiful. It is sung easily and softly by the rough and coarse men, like the hidden stream under boulders that nobody has seen, coolly and gently caressing a weathered crack.

Every day and every night, steadfast until death.

The ripe reeds grow thickly,
the crystal dew is still frost.
My beloved stands on one side of the water.

Up the stream I go in search of her;
the path is long and arduous.
Down the stream I go in search of her;
amidst the water, I find her.

The lush reeds grow densely,
the crystal dew is still wet.
My dear one stands on the edge of the water.

Up the stream I go in search of her;
the path is steep and impeding.
Down the stream I go in search of her;
upon the bank, I find her.

The teeming reeds grow side by side,
the crystal dew is not yet dry.
My beloved stands on the edge of the water.

Up the stream I go in search of her;
the path is meandering and impeding
Down the stream I go in search of her;
upon the water's edge, I find her.

Peony Pavilion

游园惊梦

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十年生死两茫茫，不思量，自难忘。
料得年年肠断处，明月夜，短松冈。

阿青

For ten long years,
we two have been
separated by life
and death;
I say I do not yearn,
yet I cannot forget.

Your grave separated us
by a thousand miles,
leaving me unable
to pour out my grief.

You would not recognize me
even if we were to meet;
me with my face
covered in dust,
my hair streaked
with frost.
At night, I fly home in my dreams.
I see you through your window,
brushing your hair
and painting your face.
Yet the one
who draws the brows
is absent.

Madam,

Madam,

there is a Taoist outside who seeks an audience.

Coo...

How can a lady who lives alone go out and meet him?

A Taoist? You really don't have courtesy, girl.

This servant apologises. However, the Taoist said that he has urgent matters that cannot be delayed.

Let him pass. Lead him to the front courtyard.

May I inquire to the reason of this Taoist's visit?

This concubine's name is Liu Jing Please excuse any rudeness I may display.

.....

This Taoist looks very familiar. Have we ever met?

This Taoist would not intrude Madam's hospitality for long.

The reason for this Taoist's visit today is only to retrieve a daily object that belongs to this Taoist's wife.

This Taoist must be jesting. I am not acquainted with the honoured wife.

May I inquire to what object this Taoist wishes to take?

That is enough.

Give it to me.

So...

So that's how it is.

The endless yearning and sweet memories are all true.

Only, when the main character stands before my eyes...

I realise that they have
nothing to do with me.

Things receive form from sentiment,

how can one not leave a trace?

Ah Jing, Ah Jing.
Do you really resent me so?

I suppose at the grave each year,
the bright moon shines in the night,
on a hill with small pine.

Ah Jing is named from the title of the poem *Jiang Cheng Zi*. Later on I felt that the meaning was too vague, and it would be much simpler to call it *Ah Jing*. This story doesn't seem to be remembered by people...

For ten long years, we two have been separated
by life and death; I say I do not yearn,
yet I cannot forget.

Your grave separated us by a thousand miles,
leaving me unable to pour out my grief.

You would not recognize me even if we were
to meet; me with my face covered in dust,
my hair streaked with frost.

At night, I fly home in my dreams.
I see you through your window,
brushing your hair and painting your face

We watch each other without a word,
only with tears making thousands of streaks.

I suppose at the grave every year, the bright moon
shines in the night, on a hill with short pines.

Jiang Cheng Zi was written by Su Shi in memory of his deceased wife. "Ten long years we two have been separated by life and death; I say I do not yearn, yet I cannot forget. Your grave separated us by a thousand miles, leaving me unable to pour out my grief."

Just by reading it softly, the words evoke a melancholy atmosphere. Reaching "the bright moon shines in the night, on the hill with the short pine", the sadness becomes like mercury spilled on the floor, a chilled heart.

Yet the one the great scholar Su loves is not his wife Wang Fu, but a concubine, Wang Chaoyun.

In the ancient times, it was very hard to be a wife. She might not like him, she might like him but he might not like her, or they might like each other but they may not be together for long. If she is extremely lucky and her sweetheart doesn't take in concubines, is not a travelling merchant, and doesn't strive for a high position that would separate the couple, then she would probably have to pray for a long life... Whether or not she is virtuous with good values, caring for the young and respectful to the old, working without a word of complaint for a lifetime, has nothing to do with these.

Ah Jing herself did not appear in this story. I think... there is no need...

Peony Pavilion

游园惊梦

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QCer:

Shinnen

"Ah Jing": It is common to add an "Ah" to the given name of a person to show endearment.

Page 03 PANEL 3

"Yet the one who draws the brows is absent." Husbands would help their wives draw their brows as an intimate action.

Page 10 PANEL 3

***"...on a hill with short pines."*:** Nobility were typically buried on hills marked by short pine trees.

Still not leaving?
What a daring rabbit.
Humans... are far more frightening than wild animals.

氣急

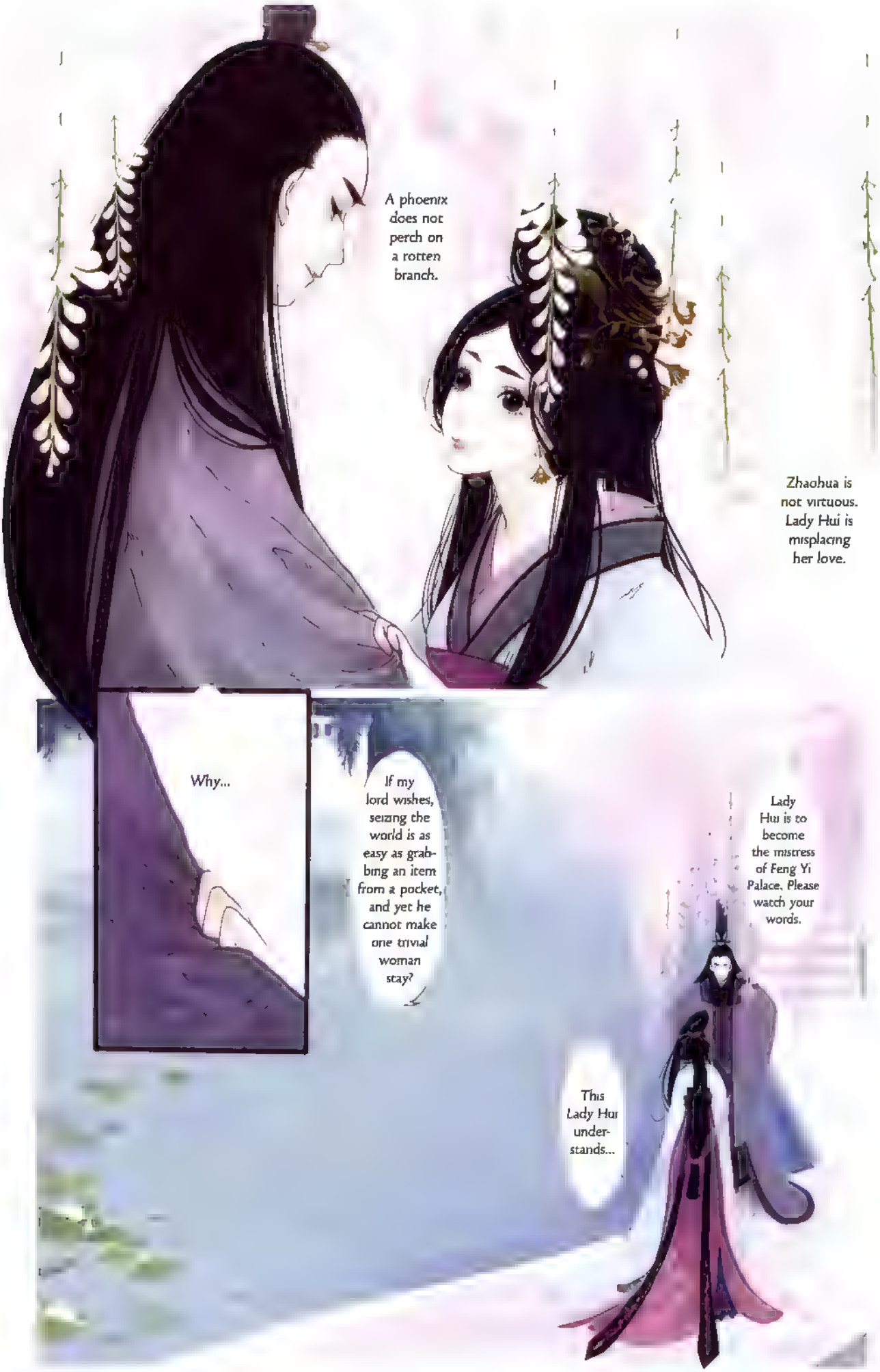
Hustling east and bustling west.

Clothes are best when new, people best when old.

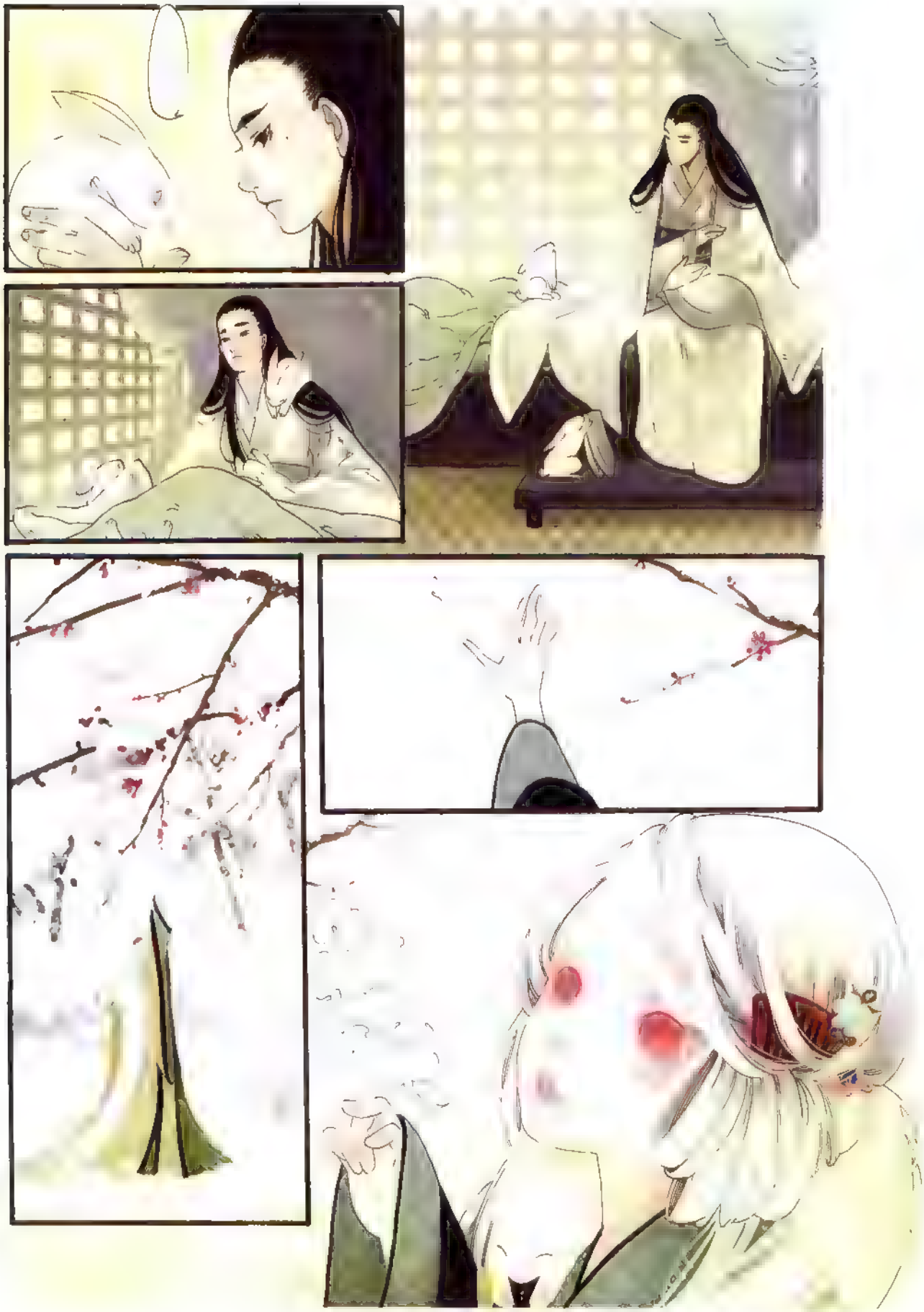
Exquisite and dignified...

Such beauty is rarely seen, all the more so as she is equipped with elegant poise and outstanding talent.

What does our virtuous brother think?
Lady Hui has the grace of a phoenix and the delicacy of jade, worthy of Your Majesty's praise.
Yes... "The beautiful lady is to be married, happily going to her lord's house." Our Feng Yi Palace has been empty for too long.
Why does Your Highness not understand this concubine's thoughts?
This lady would be happy and fulfilled even with harsh labour and bland meals.
If Your Highness does not mind Puliu's virtue, this Lady Hui is willing to serve Your Highness to old age.


A phoenix does not perch on a rotten branch.
Zhaohua is not virtuous. Lady Hui is misplacing her love.
Why...
If my lord wishes, seizing the world is as easy as grabbing an item from a pocket, and yet he cannot make one trivial woman stay?
Lady Hui is to become the mistress of Feng Yi Palace. Please watch your words.
This Lady Hui understands...

A woman's love is only a troublesome burden on this earth... As my lord wishes, this Lady Hu will enter the palace and serve her master.
But for each day that this Lady Hui lives there, she shall relish in the flames of Hell together with my lord. What says Your Highness?



I am in-debted by your care.

You must not leave this courtyard, okay?

Oh?

since your wounds are not fully healed.
You'll die if you leave,
Do you dislike this place?
Of course not.
Even Ah Jiao has only left once.
Mother said it's very dangerous outside...

Ah Jiao almost couldn't return that day.
Thank goodness Ah Jiao met that person... But from that day on, Ah Jiao doesn't want to stay here.
Ah Jiao wants to go into that world and see.
The world outside... You probably would not like it.
Long ago,
a son of an emperor fell in love with an aristocratic lady.
He loved her so much that any further thoughts would be a sin.
So he just watched her from afar, until one day she came to beg him to take her away.

But...
She was the most treasured flower of the palace. How could he bear to expose her to the wind and hail of escape?
And so she was married to the most powerful person in the world.
In less than a year, the prince was forced away from his lands for the crime of "rebelling", fleeing for his life.
And after that?
After that... He probably died.
Could you stay here?
Live here for ever and ever.
Watch the spring mist and summer sun with Ah Jiao.
Ah Jiao...

is always hoping to do something for you.
Thank you.
This place is very beautiful, just... beautiful to the point that it seems surreal.
Ah Jiao.

What are you looking at?
There's a guest.
A guest?
That s ght. Looks like he lost his way in the moun- tains.
The... c-celestial realm?

It's real..
They're not celestial beings. They're just rabbits.
Legends of celestial beings are actually true...
It's already the twelfth month, yet this elder still trekked so deep into the mountains?
It's a long story...
A few days ago, imperial guards came to the bottom of the mountain claiming a rebel prince had escaped into the mountain.
They forced us to guide them. I was worried about my lone old wife staying at home, so I got away when I had the chance, only to meet a snowstorm and lost my way.
Sigh... Thank goodness for these deities' help, or these old bones would've been buried here.

The days... it's so hard just to get by.
They say the emperor is bewitched by a demoness, and has already lost his mind.
All the princes and ministers who dared to speak the truth were killed.
That woman must have been sent down from the heavens to punish this country.
Elder,
let me tell you a way.
Follow my instructions, and at the very least you will be able to keep your family safe.
Go and bring the guards to the snowy field.
So this is how it is, huh...
The person they're looking for is there.

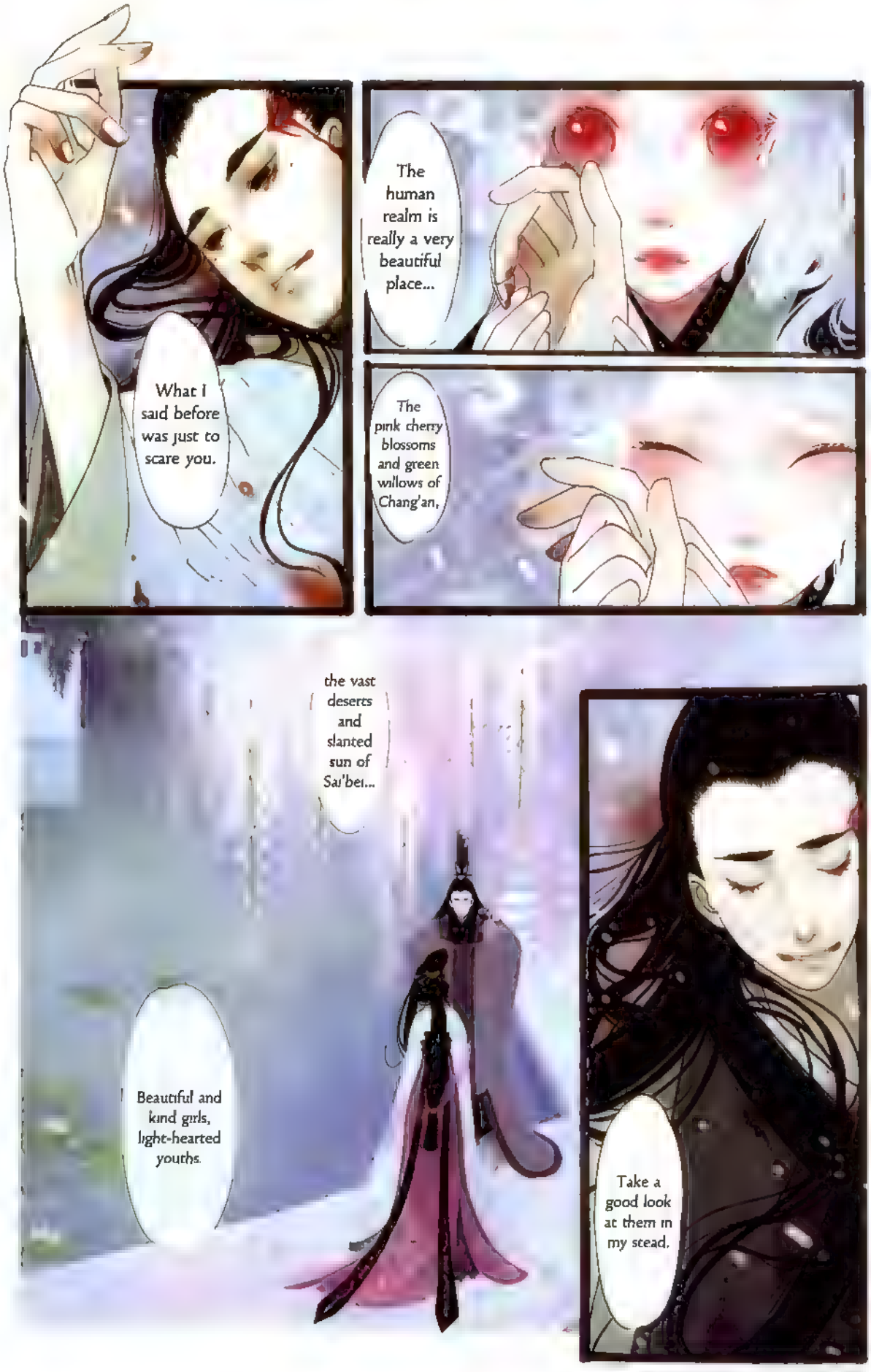
You're really leaving?
Yes.
But if you leave, you'll...
I know.
Thank you for taking care of me for these many days.
You should learn to take care of yourself, too
Don't get caught by a fox again.

So you could tell...
It's pretty hard not to.
Don't leave.
You'll die.
The world is so big, and I had just found you...
Don't be afraid,
you're not like human girls.

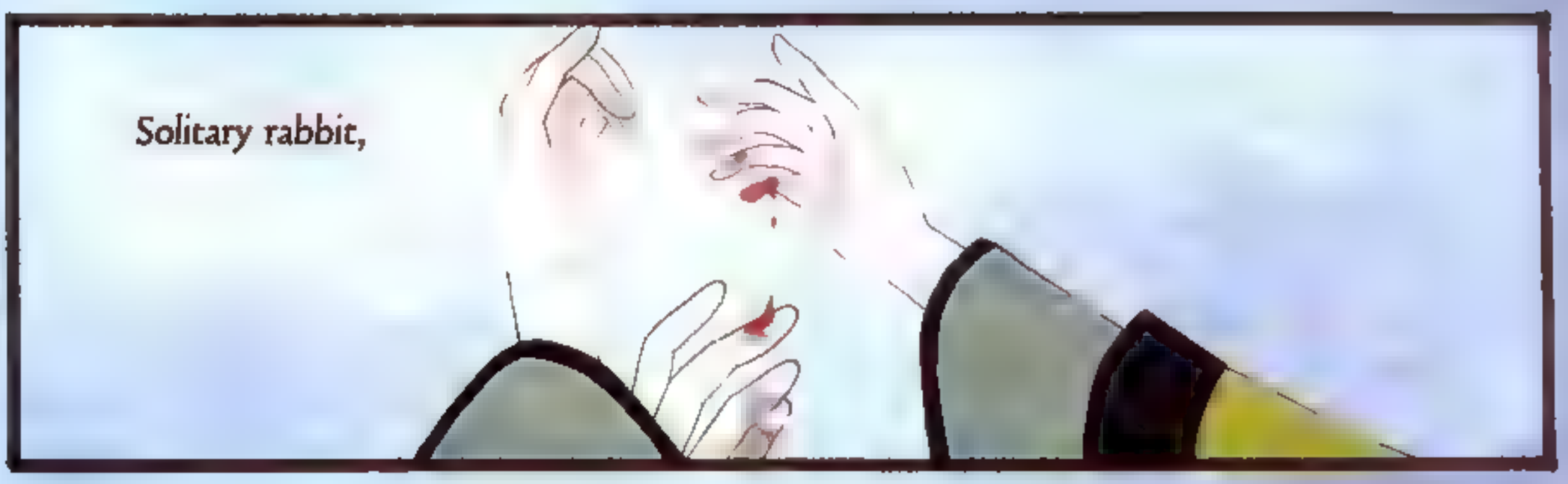
I am but a brief moment in your life.
You still have plenty of time to forget and to change.
Don't be afraid.
Go, help me take that elder down the mountain.

That is my last wish.

You came after all...


What I said before was just to scare you.
The human realm is really a very beautiful place...
The pink cherry blossoms and green willows of Chang'an,
the vast deserts and slanted sun of Sai'bei...
Beautiful and kind girls, light-hearted youths.
Take a good look at them in my stead.

Solitary rabbit,



hustling east
and bustling west.

Clothes are best when new,

people best when old.

When I read as a child, I didn't know all the characters. So if I met an unknown character, I would read it with the sound of a one that looked similar to it instead. For instance, I read 茕 (qiong) as 莹 (ying).

These memories are still carved deeply into my mind. Even now that I know the correct sounds of the characters as an adult, my first reaction would always be the sound I originally made... I think many people have had similar experiences, getting embarrased from mispronunciation of characters...

Solitary Rabbit is the last story in this series, adapted from *The Best Ancient Songs* (古艳歌)... "Solitary rabbit, hustling east and bustling west. Clothes are best when new, people best when old." A friend commented that since this is the last story, it shouldn't be a tragedy. At least not one full of anguish. I thought about it for a long time, but could not give them a happy ending. If only life could pass as first meetings go, lightly and happily...

The ending would only have been a different kind of sadness.

The Book of Song contains a piece, *Ge Sheng*:

Vines cover branches, weeds grow u ild. Here my beloved lies dead, u ho shall accompany me now?

Days of summer, nights of winter; after my death in a century, to your home I shall return.

Nights of winter, days of summer; after my death in a century, to your side I shall return.

Although lonely, there is no anguish. One only needs to wait patiently.

But for Ah Jiao, how many centuries would she have to wait? Even if she does survive through the long tormenting ages, there can never be a place by Zhaohua's side for her.

Gone without a trace from heaven and earth. Surely, it's better to choose to forget, right?

Peony Pavilion
游园惊梦
Be With You Scans
Scanner:
Translator:
Proofreader:
Editor:
QCer:
Shinnen

后
序

This is the point where *Peony Pavilion* comes to an end.

It has taken me about two years to draw from the first *Peony Pavilion* to the last *Solitary Rabbit*. In the beginning, it was because Story Magazine had eight pages of contracted colour drafts. Due to the size of the edition, it was difficult to narrate a complicated story, so under the encouragement of friends, I came up with the idea to "try out a story with an integration of art and text"... I was quite afraid when the story started, as it was my first attempt at coloured manhua and with a historical setting. It turned out that it received positive reactions from people, and so it continued. Many thanks to all the readers for their tolerance, as I really have no confidence with colour. Even though I am very happy to clearly see my changes and improvements from the beginning to the end, this also displays how inexperienced I was.

Every line and every stroke was drawn very carefully by me, never allowing any negligence.

Many friends call these stories "antiquity", and there are friends who call these "manhua".

I remember that during my childhood, grandpa would always bring something I considered to be obscure and try to make me read it. Upon rejection, he would sigh, "Such a pretty thing... Why do you have no interest...?" He was disappointed in his failure to establish in me the aesthetic sense he expected. The philistine me then was more interested in *The Four Great Beauties* than *The Eight Great Mountain People*. Even to this day, I still hold great interest in the lives of historical beauties, and I still like manhua, light novels, and video games. But I also fell in love with *The Book of Songs*, *Yue Fu*, *Song Ci*, and *Han Fu* (诗经乐府宋词汉赋) that I had once thought of as no more than a bunch of earthworms.

I don't think there are conflicts between these things. Everybody loves beautiful things, but masterful songs are not automatically enjoyed by everyone, and popular doesn't necessarily mean inelegant.

Thank you, grandpa, for introducing me to so many wonderful things. If you had not helped me push open this door, I may never have discovered

the wonders within. If he was still with us, would he have liked my manhua?

I love to draw. In the past, in the present, and in the future.

I once read "The heavens created stories, talented hands obtained them by chance". This has been engraved deeply into my memories. Is this, perhaps, the greatest realm of creating?

Chinese characters are truly beautiful and ingenious. Such complicated emotions and logic are explained with ten characters. If I could one day express what I "obtained" with that natural grace, then I would probably reach one hundred percent happiness.

I need to thank my best friend, Ling. As disorganized as I am, I was able to finish this book because of her. Many thanks to her encouragements over such a long period of time, and her unconditional support. Thanks to Sun Bo, this book's editor. He is my senior, and we have the same view on many subjects. I also need to thank students Zhang Xian and Wan Ting, who had worked hard to help me with the presentation designs. Their meticulous and beautiful designs are what enabled this book to be available.

I also need to thank every one of you who read and love these stories.

I will continue to work hard.

—Xia Da

繁散
谱图

yuán yuè

圆月

Round Moon

This is a line draft from the Mid-Autumn Festival; I was very happy while drawing this, and thus included it.

The mooncakes from last year's Mid-Autumn Festival were delicious.

yè yīng

夜莺

Nightingale

I originally planned to draw a story about a nightingale, but I didn't finish it in the end. These are a few pencil sketches I did at the time. Maybe I'll be able to finish it one day. I've always wanted to try drawing a young girl wearing bright golden clothes that seem to melt in the sunlight. It would probably be big challenge for me, who is not so bright at colouring.

This is inspired by Qing Qing Zi Jin.

rén yú

人鱼

Mermaid

This is the line draft for the picture Jiangnan mentioned in the preface. I remember it was summer then. I was sick and couldn't eat ice-cream, couldn't use air conditioning, was sweating excessively, and got bitten by mosquitoes a few times. I was filled with the desire to soak in an icy pond.

The completed version will be shown last.

ā jīng

阿菁

Ah Jing

This is the first cover page of Ah Jing, and my first attempt at using a black background. This woman is the original (the one in the story borrowed her image). I like her spirited expression while she holds her comb.

Sadly, magazines don't print black very well, so I was requested by the editor to draw another one. The redraw is the one with her holding a parrot and camellias in the background.

Personally, I like this one a bit better. Magnolias look better than camellia.

xiāng jūn

湘君

Xiang Jun

Truthfully speaking, this picture was started with the feeling of "let's see how long I can endure"...

All of the lines and designs were drawn one by one with pen. The whole thing took me about six hours. Actually, I don't think it's very tormenting, since I became addicted at the end without knowing.

It's like designing blueprints in technology. Doing manual work without feelings yet sometimes still pretty happy.

To whom does the pleasant day and beautiful scenery belong?

Thinking of Xia Da makes me think of the spring of Jiangnan.

After experiencing a long and icy winter, everything became slightly more fresh and transparent suddenly one day, like a watercolour painting, almost as if water can seep out. The fresh scent of new sprouts floats in the air; soft, melted light green fills the eyes... At this time, you should know that spring has suddenly arrived on this day. This dream-like silence and startling spring would probably only stay for three days.

In ancient classics, time is always a mystery.

In this moment, flowers bloom in clumps, vibrant colours everywhere. In the next moment, stars only have the moon for company, people leave the empty building. Once upon a time, people had joyous faces, sweet scents floated in the air. Now, everything is more complicated—one can't cut or untangle things. Walking in the garden, waking from a dream, everything suddenly becomes null.

The people in these stories never had an ending of "and they lived happily ever after". A flower blooms in the morning and wilts at night. Time passes quickly. It is life's impermanence that brings happiness and sorrow.

"Beautiful scenery as far as the eye can see, but in whose courtyard resides joy?" Even though one sighs, one still cannot let go of that gorgeous moment. Or actually, is that what one hopes for? Once we realise that we cannot retain everything, we end up allowing ourselves to become intoxicated by the beautiful scenery. How can we know whether these are dreams or reality?

I've known Xia Da for about eight years. In the beginning, at Huilongguan in Beijing, a bunch of young people who wanted to draw manhua and who wanted to edit manhua rented a big house together with much enthusiasm. When I went to look for them to hang out, I saw Xia Da, who just arrived at Beijing from Huaihua in Hunan. She was dressed plainly yet delicately, and her face was full of a child's spirit. After eight years, most of the young people were not creating manhua anymore. Only this little girl who looked weak and delicate

was still living in Beijing. She was like a story's main character, living in a quiet little building with only the deep courtyards for company. This world is forever changing. One's life cannot be stalled by "the years that have been coming and going,". The bittersweet reality need to be measured with every passing day, minute, and second. Xia Da also had to bear her troubles that cannot be cut or untangled and the empty building people left with only stars and the moon for company.

Events in stories are wonderful. It has been decided somewhere that long waits are always connected with some unimaginable happiness. Thank goodness that the artistic pen exist, recording all the precious moments, tugging on the strings of fate, coming into the hands of you and me.

Just like what Xia Da said, "Encounters are very simple. Even though we say it's an encounter, I think it's actually a natural component of life".

—Yao Feila
May 3, 2008
Beijing

Peony Pavilion

Peony Pavilion is the representative work of Tang Qianzu, a playwright of the Ming Dynasty, and an epitome of ideology and creativity. Originally called *The Resurrection*, this opera was created in 1598, and was called *The Four Dreams* together with *The Purple Hairpin*, *Record of Southern Bough*, and *Record of Handan*.

Upon publication, this opera immediately surpassed *Romance of the West Chamber*, another historical romance story. According to records, "Once *Peony Pavilion* was published, every family began reading it, forcing *Romance of the West Chamber* to reduce in price". In the feudal historical China with strict social rules, *Peony Pavilion* received welcome from all the people, especially women pressured with romantic emotions, as soon as it was performed. According to records, some young women then were so moved after reading the script that they died with anger and regret, and some actresses in Hangjou became so emotional during the "Dream Chasing" that they died on stage.

Peony Pavilion is a classic Qun opera. The Kan opera *The Resurrection* with Yiyang tone Shi Linghe rearranged was filmed for colour television, and was used to make a movie *My Beauties and Sorrow* by Taiwanese director Cheng Guofu.

Famous lines:

The flowers blooming everywhere are only accompanied by a dried well and shabby walls. Beautiful sceneries are as far as the eye can see, but in which courtyard resides the joy? My mother and father have never spoken of any such exquisite spot as this. Streaking dawn and curled dusk, rosy clouds frame emerald pavilion; fine threads of rain, petals born on breeze; gilded boat in waves of mist. The glories of spring are little treasured by the screen-secluded maiden.

—Act X, Startled from the Dream

The Book of Songs

The poem *Reed* originates from *The Book of Songs – Odes of Qin*. *The Book of Songs* is China's first poetry and song collection.

Confucius thought that by studying *The Book of Songs*, one could train one's association skills, improve one's observation skills, learn the way to criticize, use the principles present to care for one's parents and serve one's lord; so as to unite one's family, govern one's country, and create peace in the world.

The Book of Songs is a literary work that started the first river of China's thousands of years of literature studies and created the base of China's doctrine that would be achieved over many years.

Reed is not about "encounter", but about a certain "realm". "Encounter" will always create a story, but that is not always true for "realm". Most encounters use events to see significance and feelings, while realm sees them with the meanings of the text. In reality, *Reed* does not have much water, at least far less than *Hanguang* In realm, *Reed* is full of long days, broad waters, and infinite autumn scenes, like the vast expanse of misty waters in *Hanguang*. Whether that person is a faithful servant or a beautiful woman is unimportant. Whether one misses the faithful servant or the beautiful woman, the feeling of longing does not differ in terms of nobility.

Actually, this is a fable. As the saying goes, "even water borrows words". Dai Junen said, "Going up the stream, going down the stream, there are no such events. Upon the water's edge, there is no person. The poet nurtured the scene while he moved and created it suddenly. He created a false image for one side, so as to describe discomfort and depression." The poet is only stubborn in his image of persistent longing, resulting with the readers viewing persistent longing as a precious feeling. If one must attach an identity with the "loved one", one would lose half the poetry. Even though the poet's longing was originally very specific, he merged the "specific" into a vast evocative image, allowing it to posses infinite "possibilities". If so, why would we chase after the once existent "one and only"?

Jiang Chengzi

Jiang Chengzi, song from the Tang Dynasty with a single melody, originally found in the *Huajian Collection* by Wei Zhuang. It may have been named because Ouyang Jiong's song had "As if the west mirror reflects Jiangcheng".

This is a song of mourning. The author combines the misfortunes and endless lament during his ten years of politics, vividly reflects the unforgettably sincere feelings and deep remembrance for his deceased wife.

Most of the songs of the five generations of the Tang Dynasty and the Northern Song Dynasty that describes women have narrow realms, with lyrics that are vulgar and inelegant. Su Shi's song has a broad realm, true emotions, and noble character, allowing a refreshing experience for the audience. The usage of song to mourn is Su Shi's innovation. On theme and expression, this work certainly occupies a high position.

This work can definitely stand on the same ground and be compared to *The Mourning Poem* by Pan Yue, *The Sorrow of Being Dispatched* by Yuan Zhen, and *The Cry of the Nightingale* by Wu Wenying of the Northern Song Dynasty.

Romance of the Western Chamber

Written by Wang Shifu, born in Dadu (now Beijing), a famous playwright of the Yuan Dynasty. *Romance of the Western Chamber* is his magnum opus. As soon as this play is presented on the stage, it would make four rows dumbfounded, making it a favourite amongst the young men and women. Thus, it is recognised that "*Romance of the Western Chamber* is the best in the world". Throughout history, "may all the lovers in the world become family" is used as the subject of many works of literature, and *Romance of the Western Chamber* is a play that depicts this most successfully.

The story originates from a fantasy novel *Story of the Nightingale* by Yuan Zhen of the Tang Dynasty. This story became more popular in the golden age of the Song Dynasty. Many scholars and folk artists started rearranging it into songs and plays. *Romance of the Western Chamber* was created by Wang Shifu in this artistic environment.

The lyrics of the opera are brilliant and elegant, full of poetry. One can say that every song is a beautiful love poem. In *The Romance of the Red Chamber*, Cao Xueqin, through Lin Daiyu, praised it as "alerting lines, leaving plenty of sweet aftertaste".

An Ancient Romance Song

Solitary rabbit, hustling east and hustling west.
Clothes are best when new, people best when old.

Clearly a plain and dreary song, yet it is named as *An Ancient Romance Song*. This anonymous song of the Han Dynasty was first seen in *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* book 689. *Encyclopedia of Arts and Letters* book 30 records the wife of Dou Yuan writing a poem to her husband.

This is a divorce poem. "Solitary" describes a lonely figure without support. The first two lines describe the abandoned self that still misses her old companion. The last two phrases urge the old companion to remember the past.

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